



City of Santa Barbara

FAMILY DAY CARE GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDELINES

Neighbors often have many questions or concerns when a family day care home opens in their neighborhood. These guidelines are intended to help new and existing childcare providers co-exist peacefully with their neighbors.

Neighbor's potential concerns about family day care usually involve such things as increased noise, loss of privacy, increased traffic, loss of on-street parking and the possibility of unsupervised children. The following are methods that childcare providers can use to reduce the concerns of their neighbors:

- ☐ 1. If possible, take the time to meet your neighbors. Introduce yourself and let your neighbors know about your plans before you open your family day care home. When talking to neighbors, be patient and remember that not everyone is familiar with family day care. Some neighbors may misunderstand and be resistant to your program.
- ☐ 2. Take the time to listen to your neighbors' concerns. Let them know that you want to be a good neighbor. Try to work with them to establish ways to alleviate their concerns. Let them know of any precautions you are taking to avoid problems.
- ☐ 3. Make up a flyer to hand out to your neighbors (see the attached sample flyer). Make sure the flyer includes your name and phone number. Let your neighbors know that they can call you if any problems arise. The flyer should provide information about your day care home, including the number of children enrolled, hours of operation, regular times for outdoor play, and where and when parents will pick up their children.
- ☐ 4. With your neighbor's permission, take a look at your property from your neighbor's property. What concerns would you have if you were your neighbor? How does your property look? Is it tidy and well maintained?
- ☐ 5. Invite your neighbors to come visit your program.
- ☐ 6. Try to inform your neighbors of some of the advantages of having a family day care home in the neighborhood. For example, neighborhood security may be improved because you will be home much of the day while your neighbors are away at work.
- ☐ 7. If possible, try to orient play areas and equipment away from neighbors who may be most impacted by noise (for example, neighbors who are frequently home during the day or neighbors who work at night and sleep during the day). It is also a good idea to block views of play equipment from the street or from neighboring properties, either with fencing or with landscaping.

- ☐ 8. Talk to your neighbors about the hours of outdoor play. As much as possible, try to establish times that will be the least disruptive to nearby neighbors.
- ☐ 9. For reasons of safety and appearance, keep front yards and sidewalks clear of bicycles and toys.
- ☐ 10. Assure your neighbors that the children will be supervised at all times.
- ☐ 11. Think about where and when parents will park when they pick up and drop off their children. Could cars block a driveway to a neighboring property? Are the pick-up times relatively staggered to avoid too many parents arriving at once? Is there room for parking if more than one parent arrives at the same time? Would parents need to routinely park in front of a neighbor's house? If you have an assistant who drives, where will this person park? Let the parents and any assistants know where they should park and if there are any areas that they should avoid. Ask parents not to double-park or block driveways. Also ask that they observe the speed limit and come and go as quietly as possible.

If possible, provide opportunities for communication between you and your neighbors so that questions and concerns can be discussed before problems arise. Sometimes despite your best efforts, you may not be able to resolve a dispute with a neighbor. If this happens, you should try to remain patient and calm when listening to or talking to your neighbor. If necessary, you may suggest mediation through a mediation service. Mediation is a process that helps people settle disputes through the use of mediators who work with both parties to reach an agreement. Trained mediators are listed in the yellow pages in the phone book under "Mediation Services" and some will provide low cost services based on a person's ability to pay. If you rent your home, you may be able to obtain free mediation services through the City's Rental Housing Mediation Task Force. The Rental Housing Mediation Task Force can be contacted at (805) 564-5594.

SAMPLE FLYER

Hello!

My name is _____ and I am your neighbor at _____. This flyer is to introduce myself and to let you know about the childcare program that I operate in my home. The name of my program is _____. _____ is a State-licensed (large or small) family day care home. I care for # children between the ages of ____ and ____ and my hours are _____ to _____. Hopefully, this flyer will answer most of your questions about my program.

What is a (Large or Small) family day care home?

While childcare is a necessity and fact of life for most families today, a shortage of child care exists in Santa Barbara County and throughout the nation. The Santa Barbara County Children's Resource and Referral Program estimates that there is an unmet need for approximately 5,200 licensed childcare spaces in Santa Barbara County.

Family day care homes help meet this unmet need by providing child care in a home setting. A family day care home provides supervised childcare for 12 or fewer children in a provider's own home. Large family day care homes provide childcare for 7 to 12 children, including children under the age of 10 years who reside at home. Small family day care homes provide childcare to 6 or fewer children, including children under the age of 10 years who reside at the home.

All family day care homes are required to be licensed by the State Department of Social Services. Large family day care homes are also required to obtain a permit from the City of Santa Barbara.

Will the presence of a (Large or Small) family day care home affect me?

The most important aspect of family day care is that it takes place in the provider's own home. Because of this, family day care homes are indistinguishable from other homes in the neighborhood.

Family day care homes can be a benefit to the neighborhood. Prospective home buyers sometimes ask about the proximity of child care as well as schools. Also, because day care providers are home during the day, neighborhood security is often improved.

Neighbors sometimes have concerns when a family day care home opens in their neighborhood. It is my goal to be a good neighbor and to work with you to ensure that my program will not create any neighborhood concerns. To this end, I plan on doing the following:

- I have asked the parents to pick up and drop off their children (in front of my house, in my driveway). I have also asked that they not block my neighbor's driveways or

double-park, that they observe the speed limit, and that they come and go as quietly as possible. Since the parents pick up and drop off their children at different times, I do not anticipate any parking or traffic problems.

- At times, the children will play outdoors in my yard. Outdoor play will typically occur between _____ and _____, and will not take place in the early morning hours or in the evening. Also, please be assured that the children will be supervised at all times and we will make an effort to keep noise to a minimum. Please let me know if certain play hours create difficulties for you and I will be happy to work with you to try and come up with different hours for outdoor play.

Neighbors sometimes worry that a family day care home might reduce the value of their property. Many studies have explored this question and none have demonstrated any effect on property values. The reason for this is because family day care homes are indistinguishable from other houses in the neighborhood.

Who should I call if I have questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about the program, please call me at _____. I want to be a good neighbor and I will be happy to try to work things out with you.

I am licensed by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. If you have any questions about my license status, you can contact their local office at (805) 682-7647.

For Large Family Day Care Homes (ONLY):

Since I operate a large family day care home, I am also required to obtain a permit from the City of Santa Barbara. The City requires that large family day care homes provide adequate parking and passenger loading area, limit outdoor play to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and observe the City's Noise Ordinance. The City also requires that large family day care homes be at least 300 feet apart. If you have any questions about my permit status, contact the City Community Development Department Planning Division at (805) 564-5478.